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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3311
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0260
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1495
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0067
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0083
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 001640

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [DO](#) [CH](#) [VE](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: DOMINICA HOPES FOR IMPROVED U.S.-CARIBBEAN
RELATIONS

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 1140
[1](#)B. 05 BRIDGETOWN 2485
[1](#)C. 05 BRIDGETOWN 1316

Classified By: Ambassador Mary Kramer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Kramer and Dominica Foreign Minister Savarin exchanged views on U.S.-Caribbean relations in a September 8 meeting in Bridgetown. Savarin explained that, in addition to Guatemala's claim on Belize territory, Guatemala's role in damaging the Caribbean banana industry is one of the reasons Caribbean states will likely vote for Venezuela in the upcoming UNSC elections. Ambassador Kramer censured Dominican nominees for USG training programs who chose at the last minute not to participate. The two also discussed conflicting UN voting records and possible ways to improve the U.S.-Caribbean relationship; Savarin proposed closer coordination on policy issues and assistance with energy security. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) At his request, Dominica Foreign Minister Charles Savarin called on U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Mary Kramer on September 8, 2006, in Barbados. Deputy Chief of Mission Mary Ellen Gilroy accompanied Ambassador Kramer and PolOff acted as notetaker.

BANANAS AND BELIZE

[1](#)3. (C) During their lengthy conversation, Savarin discussed why Caribbean states largely favor Venezuela over Guatemala in the upcoming elections for a United Nations Security Council seat. According to Savarin, many Caribbean states are bitter towards Guatemala over two key issues: 1) its role in disrupting the international banana market, and 2) Guatemala's claims on Belize territory. The Ambassador asked Savarin for his thoughts on Venezuela's claim on Guyana's territory. In response he stated that Venezuela's belligerence on these territorial claims is decreasing while Guatemala's is on the rise. According to Savarin, Guatemala is now trying to claim all the costal regions of Belize. He stated that having Guatemala on the Security Council would be problematic if its unresolved issues with Belize were to rise to the level of UNSC involvement.

CHOOSING CHINA OVER THE U.S.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador expressed disappointment in Dominican officials who were scheduled to participate in USG exchange and training programs but chose not to attend nor to notify the embassy in enough time to find replacements. The Ambassador cited the Dominican Attorney General who recently passed up a slot with the International Visitors Leadership Program for a business trip to China, as well as a senior police officer who withdrew 24 hours in advance from ATA training. The Ambassador further emphasized that the USG wants to support Dominica in its human development goals, as Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit requested, but that championing these programs in the future will be difficult because of Dominica's apparent disinterest. Savarin appeared surprised and embarrassed. He promised to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister.

UN VOTES AND ENERGY SECURITY: AREAS FOR COOPERATION

¶5. (C) Furthermore, the Ambassador told Savarin that she was dismayed concerning Dominica's voting patterns in international fora. She asked how the two countries could say they are partners with shared values if their respective voting records at the UN diverge so dramatically. Both agreed the United States and Caribbean states should be more sensitive towards each other's policy concerns. Savarin recommended energy security as an avenue through which the United States and Dominica could strengthen cooperation and also as a potential topic for the 2007 Caribbean 2020 conference. Noting that Dominica's tourism industry is dependent on lowering current energy costs, Savarin explained that Dominica is considering opening more hydroelectric plants to make this a possibility. The DCM offered to watch for U.S. power companies returning to the Caribbean and to steer them towards Dominica and the Minister of Energy.

BIRD ISLAND UPDATE

¶6. (C) During the discussion, Savarin gave a brief update on the disputed geographical formation known as Bird/Aves Island, situated about 68 miles west of Dominica but claimed by Venezuela (ref B). At a June 26 press conference, Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit all but ceded Dominica's claim to Bird Island to Venezuela (ref A). According to Savarin, however, Dominica has not ceded its claim on Bird Island but is rather looking at technical issues of the case, such as whether islands so small can be used to enhance a state's exclusive economic zone.

BIONOTE

¶7. (C) Although verbose (ref C), Savarin exudes a calm and confident disposition that gives him an air of competence. Most striking was his juxtaposition of poise and repose. His poise would allow Savarin to look natural in any formal business setting, while his relaxed demeanor was fitting for the relaxed setting of the meeting. His roundabout conversational routes to key issues results in time-consuming, albeit pleasant, diplomacy.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) Generally, the September 8 discussion focused on the need to improve U.S.-Caribbean relations, a point on which both the Ambassador and Savarin strongly agreed. More difficult was agreeing on the tools with which the parties can accomplish this. However, Savarin's desire for improved ties appears sincere both in his rhetoric and his willingness to participate in regular, frank dialogue.

